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Legal protection for foreigners working in the U.S.

Q. *I hope to travel to the United States to work on a temporary visa. Are there any legal protections for me as a foreigner living and working in a country where I am not a citizen or resident? If so, what are they?*

The United States Government is committed to combating human trafficking and labor rights violations. In fact, U.S. law covers everyone working in the United States and requires that all workers be treated and paid fairly according to U.S. labor law no matter if they are citizens or on a temporary working visa.

If you receive a visa allowing you to work or study temporarily in the United States, you will be given a pamphlet at the U.S. Embassy explaining in detail your rights as a worker in the United States and providing free telephone numbers that you can call once in the United States if you need information or if you should require help. You can read this pamphlet online at:

<http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/general/rights-protections-temporary-workers.html>

Like the vast majority of U.S. citizens who work, the vast majority of travelers working temporarily in the United States are treated legally by their employers. U.S. Federal law, Public Law 110-457, which is better known as the *William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Act*, requires consular officers to issue this pamphlet to applicants who receive work visas informing them of their rights in order to honor the rule of law and uphold the dignity of all who come to the United States.

There are several key rights that visitors coming to work or study temporarily in the United States have. One is the right to be paid the minimum wage in the United States. This includes not just the Federal minimum wage, but also the minimum wage for the state in which they will be working. Female workers in the United States cannot be treated differently or badly because they are women or because they are pregnant. Some of the other rights that temporarily workers have include: not to be held in a job against their will; to keep their passport and documents in their own possession; to report abuse without retaliation; to request help from unions, immigrant and labor rights groups; and, if necessary to seek justice in U.S. courts.

Much more detailed information that relates to specific types of visas and specific types of working situations is in the pamphlet that will be provided if you receive a visa. As always, the U.S. Embassy wishes you a pleasant, safe and enjoyable journey!

You can find more information about how to travel to the U.S. on our website, www.kingston.usembassy.gov and the website of our authorized service provider at

www.usvisa-info.com. Keep on top of Embassy news on our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/pages/US-Embassy-Jamaica and by following @USEmbassyJA on Twitter. We also answer general visa questions on our Facebook and Twitter pages.

Remember, your appointment time is your arrival time NOT your interview time. Do not show up earlier than your appointment time.